

DETAILED ACTION

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 101

1. 35 U.S.C. 101 reads as follows:

Whoever invents or discovers any new and useful process, machine, manufacture, or composition of matter, or any new and useful improvement thereof, may obtain a patent therefor, subject to the conditions and requirements of this title.

2. Claim 22 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 101 because the claimed invention is directed to non-statutory subject matter. The claimed invention does not fall within at least one of the four categories of patent eligible subject matter recited in 35 U.S.C. 101 (process, machine, manufacture, or composition of matter). A computer software application does not define any structural and functional interrelationships between the computer application and other claimed elements of a computer which permit the computer application's functionality to be realized.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

3. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(a) the invention was known or used by others in this country, or patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country, before the invention thereof by the applicant for a patent.

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

(e) the invention was described in (1) an application for patent, published under section 122(b), by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent or (2) a patent granted on an application for patent by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent, except that an international application filed under the treaty defined in section 351(a) shall have the effects for purposes of this subsection of an application filed in the United States only if the international application designated the United States and was published under Article 21(2) of such treaty in the English language.

4. Claim 1 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by Hoffman et al. (US 2003/0055709).

Hoffman et al. disclose

a method for managing supply chain relationships between a plurality of participants, said method comprising:

- a. receiving electronic messages exchanged between the supply chain participants utilizing a computer (see, for example, Claim1, element a);
- b. parsing the received messages with the computer for one or more of participant identifier information and contextual data relating to a business event (see, for example, Claim1, element a);
- c. analyzing a performance criteria for the supply chain based on data parsed from the electronic messages (see, for example, Claim1, element b); and
- d. providing data relating to supply chain management to the relevant participants based on the analysis (see, for example, Claim1, element d and e);

5. Claim 11-15 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by Menninger et al. (US 2003/0074355).

Menninger et al. disclose,

11. A method for resolving the identities of the parties to a transaction from an electronic message received at a computer, said method comprising:

- a. identifying an originator of the transaction; (see, for example, paragraph[006])
- b. determining a context of the transaction; (see, for example, paragraph[006])
- c. finding an appropriate identifier in a database for the originator and context (see, for example, paragraph [006]); and
- d. reconciling an identity for the receiver of the message based upon the originator, the context, and the identifier in the database for the originator and context (see, for example, paragraph [006]).

12. a method according to claim 11 wherein identifying an originator of the transaction comprises recognizing at least one of a participant identifier, a product identifier, and a unit-of-measure within the electronic message received (see, for example, paragraph [006]).

13. a method according to claim 11 further comprising reconciling an identity of the participants utilizing at least an industry identifier (see, for example, paragraph [006]).

14. a method according to claim 11 further comprising reconciling an identity of the participants utilizing at least an assigned identifier (see, for example, paragraph [006]).

15. a method according to claim 11 further comprising: reconciling an identity of the participants utilizing at least name and address data for the participants; and

setting a synonym flag indicating that the identifiers for the participants sharing the same address are synonymous (see, for example, paragraph [006]).

6. Claim 17-22 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by Menninger et al. (US 2003/0074355 A1).

Menninger et al. disclose a system of;

17. a computer programmed to: passively observe messages transmitted between participants in a supply chain; identify originators of the messages based on the transmitted data; determine contexts for the observed messages; find appropriate identifiers in a database for the originators and respective contexts; and reconcile identities of the receivers of the messages based upon the originators, the contexts, and the identifiers in the database for the originators and respective contexts (see, for example, paragraph [006]).

18. a computer according to claim 17 further programmed to parse the observed messages for one or more of product identifiers and unit-of-measure data relating to the product identifiers (see, for example, paragraph [006]).

19. a computer according to claim 17 wherein the identifiers comprise at least one of industry identifiers, assigned identifiers, and name and address data (see, for example, paragraph [006]).

20. a computer according to claim 17 wherein the context comprises a business event (see, for example, paragraph [006]).

21. a computer according to claim 17 wherein to passively observe messages transmitted between participants, said computer is configured with a web hosting module (see, for example, paragraph [006] line 4-7, paragraph [007] line 5-6).

22. a computer program product comprising: a software module for passively receiving transmissions between participants in a supply chain; a software module for parsing the received transmissions for one or more of participant identifiers, product identifiers, and name and address data for the participants; a software module for comparing the one or more of participant identifiers, product identifiers, and name and address data with participant identifiers, product identifiers, and name and address data stored in a database; and a software module for reconciling identities of the participants based on the comparison (see, for example, paragraph [006]).

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

7. Claim 2 and 10 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Hoffman et al. (US 2003/0055709) as applied to claim 1 above, and further in view of Huang et al. (US 6,151,582). Huang et al. disclose

2. a method according to claim 1 further comprising parsing the received messages for one or more of product identifiers and unit of measure data for the products. (see, for example, column 27, line 2-16);

Huang et al. also disclose,

10. a method according to claim 1 wherein any unit-of-measure data for product identifiers within the electronic messages are factored to be based upon a base unit-of-measure for the respective products as defined in the supply chain. (see, for example, column 27, line 2-16)

Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art, at the time of the invention, to have modified the method of Hoffman et al. so as to include method managing supply chain relationships between a plurality of participants, said method comprising: receiving electronic messages exchanged between the supply chain participants utilizing a computer; parsing the received messages with the computer for one or more of participant identifier information and contextual data relating to a business event; analyzing a performance criteria for the supply chain based on data parsed from the electronic messages; and providing data relating to supply chain management to the relevant participants based on the analysis, in accordance with the teachings of Huang et al., in order to parse the received messages for one or more of product identifiers and unit of measure data for the products and to factor any unit-of-measure

data for product identifiers within the electronic messages to be based upon a base unit-of-measure for the respective products as defined in the supply chain

8. Claim 3-7 and 9 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Hoffman et al. (US 2003/0055709) as applied to claim 1 above, and further in view of Menninger et al. (US 2003/0074355).

Menninger et al. disclose,

3. a method wherein parsing the received messages comprises parsing the data for industry identifiers for the participants (see, for example, paragraph 006).
4. a method according to claim 1 wherein parsing the received messages comprises parsing the data for names and addresses for the participants (see, for example, paragraph 006).
5. a method of reconciling identities of the participants based on the contextual data relating to a business event received (see, for example, paragraph [006]).
6. a method according to claim 5 wherein the contextual data relating to a business event comprises roles for the participants (see, for example, paragraph [006]).
7. a method according to claim 6 wherein the roles for the participants comprise one or more of buys from, sells to, bills to, pays to, receives payment from, ships to, and receives from (see, for example, paragraph [006]).
9. a method according to claim 1 wherein receiving electronic messages comprises passively observing messages transferred between participants utilizing

a web hosting module (see, for example, paragraph [006] line 4-7; paragraph [007] line 5-6).

Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art, at the time of the invention, to have modified the method of Hoffman et al. so as to include method managing supply chain relationships between a plurality of participants, said method comprising: receiving electronic messages exchanged between the supply chain participants utilizing a computer; parsing the received messages with the computer for one or more of participant identifier information and contextual data relating to a business event; analyzing a performance criteria for the supply chain based on data parsed from the electronic messages; and providing data relating to supply chain management to the relevant participants based on the analysis, in accordance with the teachings of Menninger et al. so as to include method wherein parsing the received messages comprises; parsing the data for industry identifiers for the participants, parsing the data for names and addresses for the participants; reconciling identities of the participants based on the contextual data relating to a business event received and that comprises roles for the participants which comprise one or more of buys from, sells to, bills to pays to, receives payment from, ships to, and receives from and passively observing messages transferred between participants utilizing a web hosting module.

9. Claim 8 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Hoffman et al. as applied to claim 1 above, and further in view of Van Zoest et al. (US 2002/0082922 A1).

Van Zoest et al. disclose,

a method according to claim 1 further comprising implementing an algorithm to identify individual participants based upon their function included in the contextual relationship data (see, for example, paragraph [0028] line 2-16)

Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art, at the time of the invention, to have modified the method of Hoffman et al. so as to include method managing supply chain relationships between a plurality of participants, said method comprising: receiving electronic messages exchanged between the supply chain participants utilizing a computer; parsing the received messages with the computer for one or more of participant identifier information and contextual data relating to a business event; analyzing a performance criteria for the supply chain based on data parsed from the electronic messages; and providing data relating to supply chain management to the relevant participants based on the analysis, in accordance with the teachings of Van Zoest et al. so as to include method of implementing an algorithm to identify individual participants based upon their function included in the contextual relationship data

10. Claim 16 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Menninger et al. (US 2003/0074355 A1) as applied to claim 11 above, and further in view of Huang et al. (US 5953707).

Huang et al. disclose

A method according to claim 11 further comprising permissively adding a participant identifier for a participant whose identity cannot be reconciled (see, for example, column 102, line 17-19).

Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art, at the time of the invention, to have modified the method of Menninger et al. so as to include method for resolving the identities of the parties to a transaction from an electronic message received at a computer, said method comprising: identifying an originator of the transaction; determining a context of the transaction; finding an appropriate identifier in a database for the originator and context; and reconciling an identity for the receiver of the message based upon the originator, the context, and the identifier in the database for the originator and context, in accordance with the teachings of Huang et al. so as to include method of permissively adding a participant identifier for a participant whose identity cannot be reconciled.

Conclusion

11. The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure.

12. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to MOHAMMAD R. ULLAH MASUD whose telephone number is (571)270-5390. The examiner can normally be reached on MONDAY TO THURSDAY 7.30AM TO 5PM (EASTERN TIME).

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, JERRY O'CONNOR can be reached on (571) 272-6787. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is (571) 273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

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Examiner, Art Unit 4176

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